



One CGIAR Transition Consultations

Frequently Asked Questions

The One CGIAR transition process was born of a recognition that the evolving, interconnected global challenges facing our food systems require a unified and integrated response from the world's largest publicly-funded agricultural research network.

CGIAR has a 50-year history of partnerships that drive forward science, research and innovation. With more than 3,000 partners around the world, as well as its over [9,000 staff in nearly 90 countries](#), we recognize the ongoing importance of listening, responding and adapting to feedback from our partners and stakeholders.

The below responses provide fact-based answers to some frequently asked questions related to the One CGIAR transition.

Has CGIAR listened to diverse voices in its decision to undertake the One CGIAR transition?

Our partners have been and remain essential in guiding the One CGIAR transition process.

In 2018-2019, the One CGIAR destination was defined through an inclusive process of consultation and co-creation, led by the multi-stakeholder [CGIAR System Reference Group \(SRG\)](#), which included representatives of the regional constituencies of the CGIAR System Council and diverse members from CGIAR's System Board and leadership. The SRG drew on additional, key voices from across the global South, including from National Agricultural Research and Extension Systems (NARES) networks, farmer organizations, funders, the private sector, NGOs, governments, universities and development banks.

Diverse representation from the global South has been systematically included in key decision-making processes associated with the One CGIAR transition.

During 2020, the broad-based [Transition Consultation Forum \(TCF\)](#) brought together CGIAR's leadership and Board Chairs alongside the System Council and System Management Board, with strong representation across the global South, to refine the One CGIAR destination and set out key transition steps.

Members of the TCF formed smaller, thematic Transition Advisory Groups (TAGs), which brought in additional stakeholder voices and expertise from the global South. Of these, TAG2 working on CGIAR's research strategy carried out structured consultations with CGIAR's global stakeholders, and TAG5 working on country and regional engagement convened experts from key CGIAR partner countries to help shape a new engagement model.

Diverse representation from the global South has been systematically included in key decision-making processes associated with the One CGIAR transition, such as the Nominations Committee for the CGIAR System Board, and the Search Committee for the inaugural Executive Management Team (EMT).

Critically, CGIAR's regional and country constituencies have played a strong role in shaping One CGIAR to best address the science-policy nexus. There are 18 countries from the global South represented in five regional constituencies on the [CGIAR System Council](#) as voting members.

Many partners and stakeholders were engaged in the development of our [2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#) and in the design of our Initiatives. A demand-driven approach is central to the 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy, delivering benefits to our valued regional and country partners.

Two rounds of regional consultation (early strategy development and draft strategy stage) shaped the 2030 Research and Innovation strategy. CGIAR's recently-appointed [Regional Directors](#) led structured regional consultations across six regions with key NARES partners to seek input on priorities for CGIAR impact areas and thematic research areas, and advice on how best CGIAR could contribute through partnerships in the regions.

CGIAR's Initiative design process was very specific in developing an impact pathway from demand, research, and scaling partnerships to ensure impact objectives would be met. In 2021, Initiative design teams reached out to the stakeholders in the regions/countries again to receive feedback on their ideas and plans. Key stakeholders, including NARES partners, were involved as co-designers.

Throughout the transition process, voices from the global South have provided strong and consistent support for a unified and integrated One CGIAR fit to tackle the ever more complex, increasingly interdependent challenges of our era.

How will CGIAR continue to engage with key partners?

CGIAR's System Board is [establishing a high-level Advisory Panel that will oversee a new series of consultations](#) that will strengthen strategic engagement with its country and regional partners as it continues its transition to a unified and integrated One CGIAR.

The Advisory Panel is expected to bring together representatives from across regions and from national agricultural research systems, government ministries and the private sector. It will build on CGIAR's [Engagement Framework for Partnerships & Advocacy – Toward Greater Impact](#), which sets out the guiding principles, systems and approaches for partners and CGIAR to achieve their common goals. The Advisory Panel will support CGIAR in further developing its regional and national engagement strategies in line with the principles of this Framework.

What level of representation is there on CGIAR's governance bodies (System Council and System Board)?

After extensive consultation with 30 partner countries in 2015-2016, five multi-country constituencies were created to represent national and regional priorities on the System Council as voting members. Since 2016, the number of countries represented is equivalent to the Funders (18), who are represented through 15 Funder constituencies. These

constituencies have been among the most vocal in advocating for the One CGIAR transition to streamline their engagement with CGIAR Research Centers.

Many CGIAR System Council constituency members are heads of respective NARES and have been engaged in transition consultations. These voices have been instrumental in shaping CGIAR's work through interventions in the System Council.

Meanwhile, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are "active observers", a distinction made in 2016 to ensure important partners also had a say in the decision-making process.

The seat held by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) was vacant during GFAR's internal reforms between 2016 and 2019, but GFAR has since made a welcome return to the System Council.

There has never been a System Council meeting where the voices of those stakeholders was not welcomed, and on many of the occasions – those interventions have challenged CGIAR to consider how to further evolve our work.

How does CGIAR's new approach support regions and countries?

CGIAR's [six priority regions](#) are positioned as a central dimension of partnership, worldview, and impact, playing a pivotal role in understanding the demand of local partners and helping to leverage global science to amplify impact in local communities. A new engagement model based on a country strategic framework will support national priorities and a country coordination function, and clear partnership management with key regional bodies.

The regions reflect the spread of need and impact for agricultural science, research and innovation. Half of these priority regions – and half of CGIAR's Regional Directors – focus on Africa, reflecting the enormous importance, potential and relevance of transforming African food systems, given the continent has a [quarter](#) of the world's arable land but only produces 10 per cent of its agricultural output.

CGIAR Country Managers will help address concerns repeatedly raised by our country partners. The prevailing concern is that these countries do not want multiple Centers knocking on their door, offering individual, fragmented engagement and partnership with CGIAR, whether locally, regionally or globally. We've heard this from Turkey and Iran, from Colombia and Peru, from China and India, and Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, amongst others. CGIAR Country Managers will provide a single-entry point for engagement and a clear mechanism to respond to locally relevant opportunities, priorities and needs. They will be responsible for bringing the holistic CGIAR offer to our country partners.

How will the transition affect host country agreements?

The transition to One CGIAR is not a legal merger of CGIAR's Research Centers. Center host country agreements will be fully honored. The transition is an operational integration where

Centers maintain their legal status and assets, while working more closely together in an integrated operational structure overseen by unified governance. Center names are an important part of our proud history, and those names will continue to co-exist alongside CGIAR.

Meanwhile, a new engagement model based on a country strategic framework will support national priorities and a country coordination function, and clear partnership management with key regional bodies, as recommended by the SRG. The combined activities around country engagement set out in the [Engagement Framework](#) guarantee business continuity, and establish the basis for renewed and strengthened CGIAR/Host Countries relations. This will also include Country Managers, who will act as core focal points for engaging with country partners.

One CGIAR is about building on our broad global footprint, not moving away from it. There will be no transfer of physical assets or asset ownership, and no mass relocation of staff is planned or anticipated.

What is the timeframe for the transition and has this been delayed?

The progress has been broadly in line with stated goals. A transition of this scale and complexity – bringing together [more than 9,000 staff across nearly 90 countries](#) – is likely unprecedented among development organizations. A key tenet has been to balance speed with the need for consultation and outreach.

While there will always be areas of improvement, many important milestones have already been met including: the System Council unanimously endorsing the recommendations of the multi-stakeholder CGIAR System Reference Group (SRG); the establishment of the System Board; the appointment of an Executive Management Team (EMT) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT); and the approval of the [2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#), integrated operational structure, and [Portfolio of Initiatives](#).

What does the transition mean for Research Programs?

On March 8-9, 2022, the System Council confirmed that the [CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#), together with its companion document the CGIAR Results Framework, is the successor to the [CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework](#) (SRF), with the latter being retired with retroactive effect from December 2021, the end date of the former CGIAR Research Programs.

To date, the System Council has approved 31 initiatives, as part of the new [CGIAR Portfolio](#), which are analogous to CGIAR's Research Programs. A first batch of 19 initiatives was approved by the System Council in December 2021 to commence on January 1, 2022, and a second batch of 12 initiatives was approved in March 2022 to begin work on April 1, 2022.

CGIAR's initiative design process was very specific in developing an impact pathway from demand, research and scaling partnerships to ensure impact objectives would be met. As part

of those initiatives, six are Regional Integrated Initiatives that build on extensive stakeholder consultations before 2021, and form the demand-driven regional component of the CGIAR Portfolio.

How has CGIAR ensured transparency around the transition consultation process?

CGIAR has always maintained a public and transparent record of its System Council and System Board meeting summaries, decision registers, as well as links to lists of stakeholders involved in the transition consultation process, and monthly newsletters on its website. All presentations, staff webinars, consultations, FAQs related to the transition to One CGIAR are also on CGIAR.org and available to all.

CGIAR has been and will continue to be unwavering in its commitment to being transparent and inclusive, with a focus on creating an organization fit for the new challenges we hear about from partners.

How did CGIAR engage around its 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy?

Many partners and stakeholders were engaged in the development of CGIAR's [2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#) and in the design of a new [portfolio of initiatives](#), which includes Regional Integrated Initiatives. A demand-driven approach was central to the strategy, which was shaped by two rounds of regional consultations.

CGIAR's recently-appointed [Regional Directors](#) led structured regional consultations across six regions with key NARES partners to seek input on priorities for CGIAR impact areas and thematic research areas, and advice on how best CGIAR could contribute through partnerships in the regions.

In 2021, the design teams of the new initiatives received 1,300 individual responses from stakeholders in 77 countries, with 788 unique demand and impact partners having an active role in developing CGIAR's new research portfolio.

[CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council](#), which is balanced in favor of women, and members from the Global South, has also ensured an impartial proposal review process addressing the interconnection between CGIAR's global science and regions and countries.

In addition, each of the 32 initiatives also held stakeholder meetings to ensure they were linked to local challenges and addressed local priorities. As just one example, the [ClimBeR](#) initiative held 52 listening sessions engaging 1,465 stakeholders in 2021.

How will CGIAR continue to have impact at scale through a unified structure?

The One CGIAR transition is already unlocking the benefits of a more integrated model, including new fundraising prospects, as seen during the [COP26 climate talks](#) in Glasgow, which enable more world-leading science, research and innovation across all disciplines and regions.

The [Covid-19 Hub](#) played a critical role in offering a one-stop-shop resource for relevant agricultural research to support countries during the pandemic, uniting science and evidence from across the full spectrum of CGIAR's work.

As part of CGIAR's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, innovation and scaling concepts are centrally positioned in the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy, and in the new Initiative portfolio. To support Initiative teams and partners to develop a common understanding of innovation and scaling in the context of agricultural research for development, an [Innovation and Scaling online course](#) was developed. This introductory online course is free of charge and available to all.

The new approach has also streamlined CGIAR's communications and engagement with country partners, which have requested that CGIAR Centers speak with one voice. A key priority for the One CGIAR transition is to enable CGIAR partners at the country level to access the full range of CGIAR's global capabilities, without needing to engage separately with 15 different entities.

A key premise for the One CGIAR transition is that today's global challenges require integrated solutions for higher impact, improved relevance, quality and 'reach' of research. The new portfolio of initiatives is firmly anchored in this premise: the initiatives are not restricted to individual commodities or narrow disciplinary boundaries, but rather draw on the broad range of skills available across CGIAR to address complex and interconnected problems.

With a unified voice and engagement approach, as well as increased scale and breadth of capabilities, including on scaling and innovation, CGIAR will be more relevant and responsive to evolving needs, priorities, and circumstances at the regional, national, and local levels, and therefore more impactful.